

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

JOINT RESOLUTION

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$1,000,000 TO THE RHODE ISLAND COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES FOR DIRECT GRANT FUNDING TO COMMUNITY CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Senator Samuel D. Zurier

Date Introduced: February 16, 2023

Referred To: Senate Finance

1 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Humanities Council is a highly respected grantmaking,  
2 infrastructure and strategic partnership organization founded in 1973 as the State's designee of  
3 the National Endowment for the Humanities; and

4 WHEREAS, Rhode Island Senator Claiborne Pell authored the 1965 federal law creating  
5 the National Endowment for the Humanities, which provides support to the Rhode Island  
6 Humanities Council for competitive grants that provide the only designated support for  
7 humanities research, education, and programs to individuals and organizations making up the  
8 state's "Main Street" Creative and Cultural Economy; and

9 WHEREAS, Recipients of grants from the Rhode Island Humanities Council include  
10 elementary and secondary schools, libraries, museums, preservation and historical societies,  
11 historic sites, cultural centers, writers, film makers, researchers, archivists and community-based  
12 nonprofits, all of whom craft the stories of Rhode Island's rich and diverse culture; and

13 WHEREAS, During the COVID pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the Rhode Island  
14 Humanities Council distributed \$915,646 in emergency CARES Act grants and RI CHARG  
15 grants to 136 local organizations reaching 1,114,262 people in 33 of 39 Rhode Island  
16 municipalities; and

17 WHEREAS, The emergency grants distributed by the Rhode Island Humanities Council  
18 were a lifeline to local organizations that suffered devastating COVID-related financial reversals,  
19 and the Council's support ensured the survival of 136 community nonprofits and allowed for the

1 retention or creation of 302 jobs in the State; and

2 WHEREAS, Ninety-five percent of RI CHARG grants were made to small to mid-sized  
3 organizations (budgets under \$500,000) and to organizations led by or centered on the  
4 experiences of BIPOC communities; and

5 WHEREAS, Emergency CARES Act grants and RI CHARG grants were made possible  
6 by one-time COVID relief funds, and the National Endowment for the Humanities funding level  
7 for the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities no longer enables the Council to continue to  
8 provide the same level of extensive outreach to local organizations that was made during 2020  
9 and 2021; and

10 WHEREAS, Thirty-three states provide direct budgetary support to their Humanities  
11 Councils, including nearby Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Vermont; and

12 WHEREAS, Annual funding from the National Endowment for Humanities requires the  
13 Rhode Island Humanities Council to match one local dollar for each federal dollar received,  
14 creating the opportunity for our local council to leverage additional federal support if local  
15 appropriation funding is secured; now, therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That there is hereby appropriated, out of any money in the treasury not  
17 otherwise appropriated for the fiscal year 2023-2024, the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000)  
18 to the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities to support direct grant funding to community  
19 cultural organizations throughout Rhode Island; and the state controller is hereby authorized and  
20 directed to draw his orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of said sum, or so much  
21 thereof as may be from time to time required, upon receipt of properly authenticated vouchers.

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EXPLANATION

BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

OF

J O I N T R E S O L U T I O N

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THE HUMANITIES FOR DIRECT GRANT FUNDING TO COMMUNITY CULTURAL  
ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT RHODE ISLAND

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- 1           This resolution would authorize the appropriation of the sum of \$1,000,000 to the Rhode
- 2   Island Council for the Humanities to continue efforts to support local cultural organizations
- 3   throughout the State.

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